

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5633

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18931

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US

SUBJ: SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION

1. DURING VISIT VISIT TO SABBATH SERVICE AT LENINGRAD
SYNAGOGUE DECEMBER 21, EMBOFF FOUND LOCAL JEWS PESSIMISTIC
ON EMIGRATION SITUATION. GENERAL THRUST WAS THAT RECENT SOVIET
STATEMENTS WERE INTENDED TO FRIGHTEN JEWS AND DISCOURAGE THEM
FROM APPLYING FOR EMIGRATION AND THAT THE TASS STATEMENT AND
GROMYKO LETTER INDICATED THAT SOVIETS INTEND TO BE VERY TOUGH.
LOCAL SOURCES NOTED THAT SOVIET PRESS AND PARTICULARLY RADIO
BROADCASTS ARE REPEATEDLY PUSHING LINE ABOUT NON-INTERFERENCE
IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS RELATIVE SILENCE
ON THE ISSUE.

2. MOSCOW-BASED AMERICAN REPORTED TOLD EMBOFF DECEMBER 23
THAT HIS SOURCES TELL HIM THEY FEEL SOVIETS ARE HARDENING
LINE ON EMIGRATION. BESIDES INCREASE IN ANTI-EMIGRATION
PROPAGANDA, SOURCES POINT TO RECENT HARASSMENT OF PROFESSOR
ALEKSANDR VORONEL (SEARCH OF APARTMENT AND CALL INTO MILITIA
STATION), DESPITE FACT THAT HE HAS EXIT PERMISSION, AND TO
DEVELOPMENTS IN CASES OF WELL-KNOWN ACTIVIST, PROFESSOR VENYAMIN
LEVICH, AND HIS SONS. ACCORDING TO MEMBER OF LEVICH FAMILY,
SONS WERE TOLD THEY COULD LEAVE COUNTRY IN EARLY 1975, BUT
THAT PROFESSOR AND MRS. LEVICH WOULD HAVE TO SIGN STATEMENT
PROMISING THAT THEY WOULD NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SONS'
PRSENCE OUTSIDE COUNTRY TO PUSH THEIR OWN CASES ON GROUNDS OF
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REUNIFICATION OF FAMILY. THIS WOULD CONTRADICT EARLIER

STATEMENTS MADE TO LEVICH BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES THAT WHOLE FAMILY COULD LEAVE NEXT YEAR (FOR WHICH HE HAS BEEN PAYING BY REMAINING RELATIVELY QUIET).

3. SAME REPORTER'S SOURCES ARE ALSO REPORTEDLY COMPLAINING ABOUT VOA COVERAGE OF TASS STATEMENT AND GROMYKO LETTER, CONTENDING THAT VOA IS MUTING ITS REPORTAGE ON THE ISSUE, EVEN IN PLAYING BACK U.S. PRESS REPORTS. (SEPTTEL BEING SENT WITH ADDITIONAL DETAILS.)

4. COMMENT: ACTIVIST JEWS SEEM CONCERNED AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOVIET STATEMENTS, BUT THEY APPARENTLY FEEL STATEMENTS OFFER OPPORTUNITY TO RE-AWAKEN WHAT SOME HAVE FELT IS A FLAGGING INTEREST BY THE WESTERN PRESS AND PUBLIC IN THE EMIGRATION ISSUE.
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